

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 13-31 remain in this application. Claims 13-17, 19-24, 26-29 and 31 have been amended.

Priority

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgment of the claim for priority and the receipt of the priority document in the parent application.

35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 13-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Dev et al (U.S. Patent No. 4,932,026). These rejections are traversed as follows.

According to the presently claimed invention, a plurality of workflow servers are included in a computer system. A workflow item (data) can be transferred from a first workflow server to a second workflow server when the item has been processed by at least one client terminal under a first workflow server and reached an exit node of a first business process definition defining a first route of data among a first group of client terminals belonging to the first workflow server. This is accomplished based upon coalition information between the exit node of the first business process definition and an entrance node of a second business process definition, which defines a second route of data passing among a second group of client terminals belonging to a second workflow server. This way, a workflow item can be passed along an expanded workflow route having a plurality of sub-business processes carried out by different groups of client

terminals belonging to different workflow servers. In other words, the present invention can arbitrarily link decentralized business process definitions.

The claims have been amended to clarify the differences between the presently claimed invention and Dev et al. Dev et al disclose a system comprising only one message system (mail server) 107 and a plurality of loci apparatuses (user work stations)(see Fig. 1, Abstract and Summary portion of Dev et al). Dev et al's system operates to distribute processing of data across a plurality of loci via the message system. Data is transferred in the form of a package containing the data to be processed and a processing descriptor associated with the data. The processing descriptor specifies the order in which the loci are to process the data and also how the data is to be processed. Each locus of the loci, having received the package from the message system 101 and having processed the data, sends the package to the next locus via the message system 107 according to the definition in the processing descriptor.

Therefore, Dev et al clearly fail to disclose the features of the presently claimed invention as set forth above. Namely, Dev et al do not disclose that a workflow item can be passed along an expanded workflow route that arbitrarily links decentralized business process definitions. In other words, the Dev et al do not disclose main features of the present invention as set forth above. Namely, according to the present invention, a workflow item (data) can be transferred from a first workflow server to a second workflow server when the item has been processed by at least one client terminal under a first workflow server and reached an exit node of a first business process definition defining a first route of data among a first group of client terminals belonging to the first

workflow server. This is accomplished based upon coalition information between the exit node of the first business process definition and an entrance node of a second business process definition, which defines a second route of data passing among a second group of client terminals belonging to a second workflow server. This way, a workflow item can be passed along an expanded workflow route having a plurality of sub-business processes carried out by different groups of client terminals belonging to different workflow servers.

In light of the above arguments and amendments to the claims, it is submitted that the claims patentably define the present invention over Dev et al.

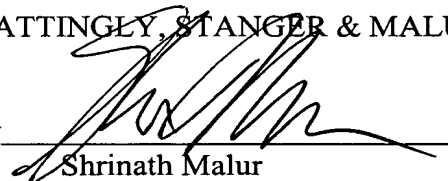
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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